GROUP INTERVIEW NO IDENTIFYING INFO
(PARKVIEW FUSHNKAI)

Project I.D. No. 203

NAME: MIZOBE, A/ DATE OF BIRTH:_____ PLACE OF BIRTH:_____
Age:___ Sex: F Marital Status:___ Education:_____

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.:_____ Age:___ M.S.___ Port of entry:_____
Occupation/s: 1._____ 2._____ 3._____
Place of residence: 1._____ 2._____ 3._____
Religious affiliation:_____
Community organizations/activities:_____

EVACUATION:
Name of assembly center:_____
Name of relocation center:_____
Dispensation of property:_____ Names of bank/s:_____
Jobs held in camp: 1._____ 2._____
Jobs held outside of camp:_____
Left camp to go to:_____

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast:_____
Address/es: 1._____ 2._____
3._____
Religious affiliation:_____
Activities: 1._____ 2._____ 3._____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death:_____

Name of interviewer: TAKARABE Date: 1974 Place: ~~SACTO~~
Translator: H TAKARABE

Conversation with Parkview Presbyteri an Issei Fujinkai members:

- Kosho Hiraga
- Sumako Itano
- Ai Miyake aiko?
- Ai Miyasaki
- Ai Mizobe
- Tome Takatsuki
- Toku Sato
- Taka Washizu

and file copy under ours (name file [illegible])

Place: Parkview Presbyterian Church, Sacramento

Time: 1974

Interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe

Translator: Heihachiro Takarabe

Itano: I was raised in a very traditional and well known family in the village. You know the life of a wife in that kind of household was very difficult. I'd seen my mother suffer a lot. There are so many things which she had to worry about. So I didn't like that kind of life at all.

Washizu: Ever since I was 14 or 15 years old, I wanted to come to America, because I didn't want to live in such a poverty-stricken Japan. It's really strange, but somehow things worked out the way I wanted.

Itano: My mother used to say, "Just because you live close to parents ~~it would~~ does not assure a happy life. There are lots of people who had a real hard time because of ~~it~~ such a situation. So it might be better for you to marry a very straight and serious person even though he might have to go far away. It seems as if he (Mr. Itano) doesn't have much money, but he will do well enough to feed you." When I said that to my husband, he said, "You were a fool, that's why you came to ~~the~~ a place like this." (laugh...)

Washizu: Well, a man who just graduated from a college wouldn't have much money. (At that time Mr. Itano just graduated from U.C. Davis in Agriculture.)

Itano: You see it turned out to be true when my mother said, "He will be able to feed you." She said, "You are very healthy, so why don't you go to America." My mother had ~~a~~ foresight because she suffered a lot in such a traditional family.

When we visited Japan last time, we didn't even tell anybody about our visit,(so that they would not make any big celebration). So my brothers were working at universities. They were really surprised to see us.

Well, I listened to my mother's opinion and somehow it worked out okay. However, I wasn't enthused about coming to America. My mother knew that I was a very independent woman and could not adjust in that kind of traditional household ~~whose~~ where women had to say, "Yes, Yes." and did whatever was told ~~to~~ them.

(Q: Japanese-in-laws used to be very difficult to get along with.)

Washizu: I used to live in Isleton. Our children had to go to a segregated school. There was such a school in Florin, too. They say those Nisei who went to segregated schools had very heavy accents.

Q: When I went to visit Livingston, someone said that ~~once~~ a Nisei student came from Florin area and because of the

Washizu: Well, when my son went to a public school, a teacher held out a pair of scissors and asked his class, "What is this?" My son said, "I know. It's hasami (scissors in Japanese). He didn't know how to speak in English very well at that time.

Itano: Around here (Sacramento) all Nisei children went to Lincoln Elementary school. Even though it was not a segregated school, there were many Japanese and Chinese children and very few Caucasian children. They were learning such elementary language as "Open the door," and "Close the door." It was very funny. However, they had a good teacher by the name of Miss Edna. It's her first name, I think, and I wouldn't know the rest.

Q: I heard a white person who taught Nisei children saying that when they drew pictures, they drew a large battle ship with a large Japanese flag and a small battle ship with a small American flag. (~~people~~ laughter)

Washizu: When we entered the concentration camp, people in Sacramento wondered whether or not all the young people in Isleton were Kibei. I said, "Oh, no. My son doesn't know Japan at all." Then they said, "Why is it that everybody speaks such good Japanese?" So I said, "Well, everybody went to a segregated school, so they know lots of words which I even don't know. However,

they were very poor in English.

Itano: You know the principal at Lincoln Elementary school was a woman, a very strict person. If boys didn't mind themselves, the only thing the teachers had to say was, "I'm going to send you to the principal." Then they would ~~shrink away~~ (quiet down)? Her name was Miss Hartley.

Miyake: There were many poor Japanese people at that time. Miss Hartley once asked Mrs. Masaki if she could get assistance for those poor Japanese people. But they did not want to receive any assistance from the government. Miss Hartley wanted Mrs. Masaki to carry this message, but they refused to accept it. No Japanese accepted welfare at that time.

Itano: At that time there was no social security, so when the husband died, the family had nothing to depend on. Their children were still small and they were really poor. Even then, they would not accept any assistance. At that time women couldn't go to work as domestics as freely as they did in recent years.

Washizu: There were those who had to send their children to Japan, because otherwise they would not be able to work. Rev. Kato was sent back to Japan when he was

three years old. Especially when their mother died, the father could not take care of them.

Itano: When their father died, then the mother could raise her children somehow. But when their mother died, the father could not take care of them.

Kiyoshi and Dorothy went through similar experience because their mother died soon after Dorothy was born . She was only 2 years old then. When I went to her funeral, their family friend, Mrs. Endo (I think it was her name) held her. It was the time when she could not understand that her mother had died. She had a round cute face, and she was looking around all over the place. I think Kiyoshi knew what was going on.

Q: Mrs. Washizu, you have three children,right?

Washizu: All my children went to high school. However, Miyoko graduated from a Jr. College. My son is working for the Post Office.

Q: How about you Mrs. Itano?

My oldest one is Harvey (PHD and MD) and then Dean who is a lawyer and manager of Guild Savings and Loan. The third one, Masashi, is a pathologist in Long Beach Memorial Hospital. Sometimes I forget what my children are doing and I get embarrased.

My daughter graduated from ~~a~~ college as a dietician.

Q: Mrs. Sato?

Sato: All my children(three) are dentists now, because my husband was a dentist.

Q: Mrs. Miyake?

Miyake: I have three children, one boy and 2 girls. My son is a college graduate. He wanted to become a teacher, so he went to a college in Minnesota. But he became an engineer. Helen was going to a junior college but we were evacuated, so she learned sewing in Chicago. The oldest daughter went to UC Berkeley.

Q: Mrs. Mizobe?

Mizobe: I have two daughters, Toyoko and May. Toyoko is the older one. Both went to Jr. College. Toyoko was in college when we were evacuated.

Q: Mrs Hiraga?

Hiraga: I have 8 children. They all graduated from colleges. George went to a college in Los Angeles. He is a diplomat and now he is stationed in the Philipines. The Second one is in Los Angeles. He is a minister turned ~~a~~ social worker. He went to college in Minnesota. He went to Japan and then went to Seminary. Willie went to school for architects. Now he is doing ~~a job~~ work which deals with building bridges and developing land.

Sherly went to a junior college. The rest of girls went to high school. All were married.

Q: Mrs. Miyasaki?

Miyasaki: I have three daughters and a son. The oldest one, a daughter, got ~~marry~~ married early, as soon as she graduated from ~~a~~ Jr. College. The next one graduated from high school and was sent to Japan to attend Seishin Jogakuin (Women's College). As soon as she came back, the war started. The third one was attending a Jr. College when the war started. So she didn't get to graduate, but she went back to college after they got married. My husband died when Dan, my son, was in college, with one more year until his graduation. He was attending a dental college in Chicago.

Q: Mrs. Takatsuki, you don't have any children, right?

Takatsuki: Yes, that's right.

Hiraga: I guess I have the most children. My children liked school, so they all wanted to go to school.

Q: They told me that Nisei did very well in school, why?

Itano: You see, we had ~~nothing~~ no way to improve ourselves, because of discrimination, however, there was one thing we could do which was to send our children to school. You know that they had to be a lot better than white people (to get a job). If they were equal, then Nisei would have no chance. However, I didn't have to tell my children to study. I did tell them to study Japanese, though.

Q: How about other people?

Takatsuki: This is the way I feel. Nisei ~~were~~ are Americans. Their mothers stayed home. However, nowadays both parents work and The children ~~were~~ are left alone at home. So this might have something to do with their grades being lower than those of Nisei. I also think that children (Japanese-Americans) now are used to too much ~~of~~ luxury. Issei were very poor.

Itano: Friends are also an important factor, too. If they had good friends, then it was OK. Japanese lived in a small area, so everybody knew what The children were doing. Even school teachers knew The childrens parents, so ...

Takatsuki: That's right. They didn't have too many white children as their friends.

Q: Why Nisei ~~studied~~ studied The hard?

Itano: Of course parents encouraged them very much. I think parents wanted them to become better educated and more recognized by the society than Issei were. I think this was the real wish which was ~~behind~~ in The parents mind.

Washizu: You see, Issei came to ~~the place~~ America where they could not speak the language and had no rights. We even could not buy land, because we did not have citizenship. Issei knew that they couldn't advance very far, but they really wished that at least their children ~~can~~ could become successful.

Itano: However, even if some of the Nisei graduated from Engineering school, they could not get jobs in those days. I knew there were those who said, "What are you talking abut! Even if you graduated from college, you can't even get a job. There is no use going to school!" There were some people like that. Besides, if their kids worked at a farm, or a fruit stand, they could make money immediately. Take Imagawa, for instance, even though their children graduated from college, they couldn't get jobs. But they still sent their children to school. They were really interested in education.

Washizu: There was a time like that. If they thought about immediate imcome, going to school was a waste of time. For example, I knew a Nisei who graduated from Harvard University, but the only job he could get was a job as a delivery boy at that time.

Itano: In one way of looking at it, because of the war, Japanese Americans were forced to relocate and became exposed to many more areas of America. That's why people in the East began to recognize the Nisei's ability.

Miyake: It's very important to do well in school, but I have never told my children "not to get behind others". I have been reading "Fujinno Tomo" ("Friends of Housewives", a magazine for housewives) for a long time. There were many good articles in there. Some of them, particularly those articles of Hani, Motoko ~~articles~~, were good. She often quoted from the Bible. Once she was asked by an interviewer where she got the idea about her school. She replied,

"I got a hint from the Bible." She said, "You should ~~never~~ teach children not to ~~get~~ be defeated. It's OK when they win. But if he/she ~~get~~ defeated, then ~~your children~~ The child will bear a grudge against others. I would like to say, 'Do your best!' If you do well, then you'll be very happy. Even if you ~~didn't~~ don't do well, you can accept yourself. At the same time you can ~~s~~sympathize with others who ~~didn't~~ don't do well. You should never insist on winning. Otherwise you would not be able to be kind to others."

Itano: However, Japanese parents said, "Don't get defeated!" quite often. I used to hear it very often. They would say, "Makeruna!" (don't get defeated).

Washizu: However, soldiers of 442 must have put up a maximum effort because they heard "Makeruna!" from their parents.

Miyake: However, I feel that this comes from the Nisei's patriotic spirit for America.

Itano: It's true. It's not just Japanese who loved their own country. Nisei didn't say that by words, but they sure cooperated with the government and showed their patriotism by action. I think Nisei are very honest.

Miyake: I ~~felt~~ feel the same way. It's not just Japanese who taught patriotic spirit. Americans also taught their children the spirit to love their country. I was still at Tule Lake, and Masako was in Minnesota when we had to decide whether or not

we should go back to Japan. So we wrote to her about it. Then she said, "Mother, if you want to go back to Japan, you ~~could~~ can do that anytime you want. However, even if I'm alone, I would like to stay here and serve America."

This was her letter to us. For the first time I felt that American children were indeed taught the spirit of patriotism little by little in the schools. It comes from the fact that they sing national anthems, and from ~~doing~~ other things at school. It is a very gradual process. It's not because she went to the East, but because she attended American school. That's how I feel.

Q: Mrs. Sato, how did you educate your children?

Sato: Well, you know I didn't understand anything, so I just let them do whatever they wanted to do.

Itano: At Sato's ~~young people~~ The children had to do better than their father, since he was an Issei dentist.

Sato: I feel they had good friends.

Miyasaki: At that time the environment was very good.

Q: Your children's friends were ~~whites~~ hakujin (Caucasian)?

Sato: No, they were Japanese, the Masaki's boys, Dr. Sato and others. I really feel it was because of their friends' influence that they turned out OK.

Itano: I received a Christmas card once from Mr. Nagaishi, a former Japanese school teacher. He said, "I'm sorry I haven't been able to communicate with you for a long time. One of the reasons why I couldn't write to you was because I feel that I had not been successful in teaching Japanese to your sons. I tried my best but I was not very successful. So I have been feeling very small." Well, I cried, because it wasn't his fault. (He took care of my son, Harvey.) It was because my boys were lazy and didn't study hard enough.

I told them that if they could get good grades at the ~~Whitemen's~~ Public school, then there was no reason why they couldn't do well in Japanese school. They just didn't want to put in ~~an~~ The effort. I used to be scolded by my husband, because The boys weren't studying Japanese hard enough. My husband used to say, "You are staying at home ~~and~~ why don't you help them to study Japanese." This used to give me a headache.

I suppose when they went to Japanese school, they relaxed and didn't study. If the teacher was real strict teacher, then the students would learn ~~it~~, but...

They say that Mrs. Makita was a real strict teacher. Even the boys minded their manners and studied hard in her class. If a teacher was lenient, The boys were very noisy, tapping taping on the desk, and ~~did~~ doing all kinds of things in class.

Q: Mrs. Mizobe, why did Nisei do so well in school?

Mizobe: I suppose it's because they were diligent. They were Americans, so they had to be educated well here. I wouldn't know the other reasons. If you study hard, then it ~~would~~ become your own treasure.

Q: Did you think Nisei knew that?

Mizobe: I think so. You see their parents didn't understand too much about ~~things of~~ America. It was very inconvenient. So ~~they~~ the children just couldn't afford to be indifferent ~~for~~ about studying.

Itano: One day a Nisei parent asked me how we helped our children to study, because her children (~~Nisei~~ Sansei) weren't studying very much. I told her that I ~~never~~ had to tell them to study, but it was very important to create an atmosphere where children could study hard. All my brothers went to college in Japan and there aren't any who stopped at the middle school. So I used to tell my children about them. I suppose there ~~were~~ was such an atmosphere at my home. We never told them ~~to work as fast as they can.~~ They had to get a job right away. There were those who quit school and started working. You couldn't blame them because Issei didn't have much economic power to send their kids to school one after another.

Takatsuki: I think kids who came from rich family ~~didn't~~ tend not to do very well. It's the kids who came from a rather poor family who tried their best. You see, they knew the situation at home. They couldn't fool around. The other thing is that, before the war when children finished classes at their public school, they used to go to a Japanese school. They just didn't have a chance to play. As soon as they ate their sweets after school, they had to go to their Japanese school. So they didn't have time to get involved with bad ~~[illegible]~~ children's groups.

Itano: Well, they didn't even let ~~you~~ them in. The groups our children

Takatsuki: Nowadays Nisei are scattered in the ~~white~~ community and they don't live in the same area together. So Sansei children associate with ~~white~~ their children in their neighborhoods. You don't know whether those children are good or bad. And most of the time ~~these white~~ The parents don't know where their kids are. Once a Japanese parent called her neighbor trying to find her children's whereabout. The neighbor said, "Well, they'll come back when the time comes. You don't need to watch them that carefully." Nisei still worry about their children's whereabout. But because they associate with anybody nowadays, Sansei children are ~~easy~~ apt to get involved with bad groups. anyway.

Others: You are right!!

Miyasaki: When our children ~~are~~ were growing up, they studied hard. That's all they did. So when they came back from Japanese school, they ate some sweets and then they studied again. All Japanese children did the same. So naturally they learned to study hard.

Itano: They didn't have that much freedom. So it was better for them.

Q: Did you send your children through school?

Itano: Yes, we did.

Sato: Yes, we did.

Miyake: No, we didn't. My children worked during summer vacation

and also worked when they could. So I didn't have to send any money to them.

Miyasaki: Well, ~~as for~~ Dan, ~~he~~ worked during the summer and saved up about 4 to 5 thousand dollars. However, it wasn't enough for his expenses, especially for the dentistry. They said they needed over $10,000 a year. So I helped him out. It's almost impossible to go to the school of dentistry by yourself. I sold some bonds which my husband had in order to make money available to ~~for~~ him.

Itano: It was a real good use of that money.

Miyasaki: Yes, because of that he can make good money.

Itano: My son, Masashi, also went to work in Marysville and other places. However, ~~their~~ his earnings weren't that much. If ~~they were~~ he had ~~to~~ spent it for tuition, ~~they couldn't~~ it wouldn't have lasted more than one semester, because ~~they~~ he had to spend a lot in the beginning.

Q: How about you, Mrs. Hiraga?

Hiraga: My oldest son attended school in Japan. We had to send money ~~for~~ to him. ~~There were some who~~ Some of our sons went to school here. So we had to spend money for them, too. Some of them worked at a cannery. Then one of them went to Los Angeles. Our Girls learned sewing and other things.

Itano: I think Harvey worked in his school, too.

Q: I still have one more question. Just because you went to school, it doesn't mean that you can become a fine person, does it?

Miyake: I feel that you need both public school education and family education.

Itano: Even then, one must build that up before they graduate from high school. I don't know how successful I had been.

Q: When Japanese say, "Learning" it also includes building of one's moral character. It's not just knowing things.

Itano: I agree with that. Just because one ~~went~~ goes through school, it does not assure him ~~to~~ of becoming a fine person.

Takatsuki: Back in the old days, we used to learn "shushin" to learn moral codes. However, they do not teach things like that here.

Miyasaki: They don't come to church, either.

Takatsuki: If children don't go to a temple or a church, they ~~wouldn't~~ don't have a chance to learn these things.

Q: In Japan, teachers weren't just somebody who taught subject matters. They taught something about building a good character. However, teachers here don't do that.

Itano: I think teachers here are very specialized (so that they can't teach morality).

Takatsuki: In Japan if the church ~~were~~ was Christian, one, then ~~they'll~~ they'd go to church. However, if they were not, they did not have much chance

to go to a temple or shrine. So they needed to teach morality at school. When we were going to school, we learned it, but they don't teach it any more.

Q: In one way the American educational system is very inconsistant. High school students cannot smoke on the school premise. Sometimes the vice-principle will make the a round and if he finds someone smoking, he can order him to stop smoking. However, if kids ~~were~~ are smoking just outside of the school, he ~~couldn't~~ can't say anything. ~~If it was~~ In Japan, a teacher is a teacher wherever he may be. When they say don't smoke, it ~~carried~~ carried out wherever he went. So it ~~was~~ is very consistent. Not Here.

Washizu: I don't understand the system here either. Once our house was burglerized. It was in Isleton. So I notified the police that my house was burglerized. Well, he said, "I'm a police for the city and I can't go out to the a county to take care of it." I thought it was ~~funny~~ strange.

Miyasaki: You must have been in a different district.

Itano: However, she must ~~gone~~ go to the closest place for ~~the~~ protection.

Washizu: I don't understand that, because we were in the same Grand Island. So I felt that he was running away from his responsibility. Even in this town, the police will come after the burglers who are running away. It's because they ~~were~~ are worried about their own safety.

Itano: When we were raising children, we could say whether or not they could associate with certain other children. Nisei were

very obedient. However, nowadays, children have too much freedom. Parents have to worry about them very much. When our children were growing up, we could tell where they were and what they were doing.

My son, Harvey, never said anything about himself and his acheivements at school. Others' parents used to tell me about his activities. His friends used to tell their parents about him and then in turn they used to tell me. They wouldn't tell me anything bad about him, though.

Takatsuki: The ~~world~~ community was much ~~smaller~~ closer then.

Miyasaki: I feel Japanese parents were respected by teachers, too.

Takatsuki: Children's education begin when ~~they~~ were very small. My niece in Texas brings her two children to their Sunday School every Sunday. The younger one who is 3 now said, "Grandma, why don't you go to church? I go to church dressed up. It's very good to go to church!!" Children must be trained from childhood.

Washizu: .....this man took 3 children and went back to Japan right after the war. He said he and his family were placed with the people who came back from Manchuria and Taiwan. When they were fed, the food looked like chicken feed. So he was looking at the food for a while. Then a refugee from Manchuria came by and said, "Oh, are you through with it? Can I take it away from

you?" and he took it away and ate it up.

One day he asked the waiters, "Would you please give us a little better food?" Then the waiter said, "I can't do anything about that. Talk to the cook!" In ~~the~~ comparisen to the refugees from Manchuria and Taiwan, The American situation was much better. The WRA told us to take as much as we can carry. So some people wore 2 to 3 underwear~~s~~, 2 pairs of pants, and 2 overcoats. On the other hand, people from Manchuria didn't have anything, they say because it was in August.

In Japan there were quite a few thieves after the war. ~~These~~ People slept with a big stick, ~~papa and his boy~~, so that when a thief came in, they could fight him back.

I went to visit Japn in 1949. People in this church gave me a farewell party. I felt like I was a ~~King~~ Prince or something. I also received a party from a Kenjin Kai (prefectural association). I met the person whom I was talking about. He told me, "Every time I see my children's face at sleep, I say to them in my heart, "Please forgive me. I made such a bad judgment. We left a country where there were everything abundantly and came to this country where there is nothing. Please forgive me."

This father was really emotional about it. Because this father told his children that Japan was a very good country and that's why his children came with him. However, the situation was completely different.

Miyasaki: However, Tule Lake was very rough for a while. We had to leave for Colorado. Didn't you go with us?

Washizu: Yes, we did. However, we were in a different passenger coach. We all were together. Life is such a long journey and there are lots of things which happen. I don't know how I survived to this day. Rev. Takarabe, you should go to the Tule Lake Pilgrimage (1974). You will hear all kinds of stories. There are many people who died in the camp. They died with a great deal of regrets.

We used to call the camp (Tule Lake) haisho no chi (a land of exile). When we wrote a letter, we opened it with a line, "We have been looking at the moon for so many months/years from the land of exile."

Q: What do you mean by Haisho?

Washizu: It means that we were sent away to the land of exile.

Miyasaki: You know Sugawara, Michizane who was sent to exile. He composed a poem from the place of exile saying, "I am looking at the moon from the land of exile." He was sent to a very lonely place, so he expressed his feeling in a poem. Well, we all experienced the same loneliness and hardship.

Washizu: Well, then the news came to us at Colorado that Japan had lost, people were beside themselves. Their faces were pale and no one said a word. All Issei were walking like they had no bones in them. Because many people thought that Japan would win. So no one dared to look at others' faces. No one said a word.

It was unconditional surrender, such a miserable state. I feel it was really great that Americans lifted the Emperor alone.

Miyasaki: It was because of the good will of Chiang Kai-Shek. He did a lot of good things for Japan. Unfortunately China was divided into two.

Washizu: After the war, we were wondering where I should go; to the East, or Japan or to California. I thought about this every day. At that time, Rev. Nakamura extended his saving hands to us. I will never forget his kindness. He was always smiling. (After he opened a hostel at Parkview), he went to the railroad station everyday to pick up Japanese people who were coming back to Sacramento. At that time, Nisei were holding small babies. They came to our church and ate meals. Then Rev. Nakamura would help them to get settled, or help them to go to the East.

Rev. Nakamura was very helpful to Japanese community. I really feel we were lucky to survive those ordeals. There are many people who had lost their lives because of this evacuation, though.

There were many Issei who were interned. The government didn't want leaders to be around, so they put them in internment camps. There were lots of people who died there, too.

There was a man who had worked as the president of the Japanese Association in Isleton. He had a heart condition. However, the FBI

agents forced him to get ready to be ~~incarsolated~~ incarcerated .....

(The conversation ends at this point.)